

Shaykh Yūsuf of Makassar (d. 1111 AH/1699 CE): A Bio-bibliographical and Doctrinal Survey

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Abstract: Compared to the pre-modern Arab and Persianate worlds, relatively little is known about the intellectual life of the Malay-Islamic world between the 13th and 19th centuries, and even less is known about its individual figures and their contribution to different fields of learning. This article seeks to redress this scholarly neglect by introducing Shaykh Yūsuf (d. 1111 AH/ 1699 CE), a scholar and Sufi warrior of Makassar, who led the armed opposition against the Dutch colonial forces, for which he was captured and exiled to Ceylon and later to South Africa, where he breathed his last. In this article, we examine his intellectual career and legacy, focusing on the key concepts in his teachings such as the need to observe the Divine Law (*Sharī'ah*) as well as to attain the Truth (*Ḥaqīqah*) in order to draw near to God and become one of His “friends” (*awliyā'*), which can be achieved through constant liturgical remembrance of God (*dhikr Allāh*) as a means to attain the Truth. This study uses the historical-critical approach to investigate Shaykh Yusuf's ideas on Sufism, which may explain his political activism and resistance against colonial rule. Drawing upon the extant manuscripts of his treatises that are now preserved in the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta, this study concludes that Shaykh Yūsuf's life embodied the values central to Sufism, i.e., relentless trust in God, unfading sincerity, and unabated sense of sacred duty.

Keywords: Shaykh Yūsuf; al-Makassari; Sufism; Malay world; Buginese

Abstrak: Dibandingkan dengan kawasan Arab dan Persia pra-modern, hanya sedikit yang diketahui orang mengenai kehidupan ilmiah di alam Melayu-

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Islam antara abad ke-13 dan ke-19, dan bahkan lebih sedikit lagi yang diketahui tentang tokoh-tokohnya serta sumbangannya terhadap berbagai bidang ilmu keIslaman. Artikel ini berupaya untuk memperbaiki keadaan ini dengan memperkenalkan Syekh Yūsuf (w. 1111 H/ 1699 M), seorang ulama dan pejuang sufi dari Makassar, yang memimpin perlawanan bersenjata melawan pasukan kolonial Belanda, ditangkap dan diasingkan ke Srilanka dan kemudian ke Afrika Selatan, tempat beliau berjuang sehingga wafat. Dalam artikel ini, kita mengkaji karir intelektual dan warisannya, dengan fokus pada konsep-konsep kunci dalam ajarannya seperti perlunya menaati Hukum Ilahi (Syarī'ah) serta untuk mencapai Kebenaran (Ḥaḳīqah) agar bisa mendekat kepada Tuhan dan menjadi salah seorang “sahabat”-Nya (awliyā') yang dapat dicapai melalui amalan terus-menerus mengingat Tuhan (dzikir) sebagai sarana untuk mencapai Kebenaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan historis-kritis untuk menyelidiki gagasan Syekh Yusuf tentang tasawuf, yang mungkin menjelaskan aktivisme politik dan perlawanannya terhadap pemerintahan kolonial. Berdasarkan manuskrip-manuskrip risalahnya yang masih ada dan kini disimpan di Perpustakaan Nasional Jakarta Indonesia, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahawa kehidupan Syekh Yūsuf mengandung nilai-nilai inti tasawuf, yakni rasa percaya yang tiada henti kepada Tuhan, keikhlasan yang tiada henti, dan rasa tanggung jawab suci yang tiada henti.

Kata kunci: Syekh Yusuf, al-Maqassari, Tasawuf Nusantara, ulama Bugis

Introduction

Few figures in modern Islamic history were as politically active and intellectually prolific as Shaykh Yūsuf of Makassar. Contrary to the stereotypical images of Sufis as ascetics and quietists who prefer to withdraw from worldly life, sit in isolation and occupy themselves with contemplation and devotion to God, Shaykh Yūsuf took on politically active roles in the Sultanate of Banten. His being a spiritual master of several Sufi orders (*tariqahs*), and an important transmitter and interpreter of mystical tradition reaching back to Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 637/1240) and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), did not deter him from leading a guerilla resistance movement against Dutch colonialism. In the wake of growing interest in Shaykh Yūsuf and his intellectual legacy in recent decades – thanks to *inter alia* the works of the late Azyumardi Azra¹ and

¹ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII-XVIII* (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), esp. 87-108. This was originally a PhD dissertation submitted in 1992 to Columbia University entitled “The

Nabilah Lubis² – that have stimulated further studies in the academia,³ the present article attempts to provide a clear account of Shaykh Yusuf's life and legacy, and shed light on his major teachings which are still followed to this day.

Biography and Political Activism

Shaykh Yūsuf was born in Gowa in 1037 AH/1627 CE, about two decades after the local kingdom of Gowa officially adopted Islam in 1603.⁴ His full name was Yūsuf bin 'Abdillāh bin Abī al-Khayr al-Jāwī al-Maqāṣarī al-Manjalawī Abū al-Mahāsin al-Tāj al-Khalwatī, also known in his native land as *Tuanta Salamaka ri Gowa* (Our Gracious Master from Gowa).⁵ While the two affiliations al-Jāwī ('of Java') and

Transmissions of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia: Networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", later published as *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay- Indonesian and Middle Eastern Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Honolulu: The Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with Allen & Unwin and University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.

² Nabilah Lubis, "Studi Naskah *Zubdat al-Asrar fi Tahqiq Ba'd Masyarib al-Akhyar* Karya Syekh Yusuf al-Taj: Studi Kajian Filologi," PhD diss. IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 1992; later published as *Menyingkap Segala Rahasia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1998).

³ See, for instance, Abu Hamid, *Syekh Yusuf: Seorang Ulama, Sufi dan Pejuang* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1994); Tudjimah, *Syekh Yusuf Makassar: Riwayat dan Ajarannya* (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia, 1997); and Syamsul Bahri Andi Galigo, *Pemikiran Tasawuf Syekh Abu Mahasin Yusuf al-Taj* (Kuala Lumpur: Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia, KUIM, 2004).

⁴ According to the historical records of the Buginese and Makassarese, although a small number of Muslim merchants might have already settled in the city port of Makassar sometime earlier, the conversion of the king and his subjects to Islam occurred after the arrival of three preachers from Minangkabau by the name Dato' Tiro, Datu Ri Bandang, and Datu Patimang. See Andi Rasdiyanah Amir (ed.), *Bugis-Makassar dalam Peta Islamisasi Indonesia* (Ujung Pandang: IAIN Alauddin, 1982), 23; Christian Pelras, "Religion, Tradition and the Dynamics of Islamization in South Sulawesi," *Archipel* 29 (1985): 107–135, also published in *Indonesia*, 57 (April 1994), 133–154; and Mattulada, *Menyusuri Jejak Kehadiran Makassar dalam Sejarah* (Ujung Pandang: Hasanuddin University Press, 1991), 39–46.

⁵ Kamaruddin *et al.*, *Lontarak Bilang Raja Gowa dan Tallo* (Ujung Pandang:

al-Maqāṣarī ('of Makassar') are obvious, the third one al-Manjalawī turns out to be the Arabicised form of toponymic Moncongloë, which is the name of his home town in Maros, South Sulawesi. The epithet Abū al-Maḥāsin is common among the learned Muslims since medieval times (cf. Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Juwaynī), whereas his honorific title al-Tāj al-Khalwatī (the Khalwatī Crown) indicates the high status he has achieved within the Khalwatiyya Sufi order.

The historical situation in which Shaykh Yūsuf lived is worth noting. It was a time of European imperial growth and conquest of Asia where the Muslim sultanates were facing military challenges from Western colonial powers. First, the Portuguese conquered Malacca in 1511 and then the Dutch arrived in 1596 and soon managed to establish their hegemony by cleverly employing *divide et impera* strategy, i.e. playing one kingdom against one another and encroaching upon the Muslim-controlled territories from Aceh to Ternate. As far as the local population is concerned, the majority were still Hindus, Buddhists or pagans, although conversion to Islam was already underway, thanks to the Sufi missionaries arriving from the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, Iraq, northern India, and Central Asia who not only provided spiritual guidance and care for the natives but also served as political advisors to the local rulers (sultans). Shaykh Yūsuf fit perfectly into this *milieu*, as if he was not only born in it but for it.

Shaykh Yūsuf's life can be roughly divided into three periods; the first covering his early years and education, both in Makassar (Celebes), Banten, Aceh, Yemen, and the Holy cities of Mecca and Medina, as well as a brief visit to Constantinople, up until the age of 40; the second period was when he returned to Banten and began his intellectual career and political activities; and the third, when he was exiled to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) for several years and later to Cape Town (South Africa), where he became a virtual recluse and spent the rest of his life teaching and writing.

According to Abu Hamid, local legend has it that Shaykh Yūsuf's father, of whom little is known, reportedly had supranatural abilities such

Proyek Penelitian dan Pengkajian Kebudayaan Sulawesi Selatan La Galigo, 1985/1986), 10, and the anonymous *Riwayakna Tuanta Salamaka ri Gowa*, *passim* as quoted by Abu Hamid, *Syekh Yusuf*, 79.

as walking off the ground and is even said to be the mysterious Prophet Khidr, whereas his mother was Sitti Aminah, daughter of *Gallarang* (Prince of) Moncongloë (whence Shaykh Yūsuf's eponym (*nisba*) in the colophon of the manuscript: "al-Manjalāwī"). She is claimed to have been pregnant before she was divorced and later married to the 14th King of Gowa, namely Tumenanga ri Gaukanna I Manga'rangi Daeng Manrabbia, who upon his conversion to Islam assumed the title "Sultan Alauddin." It was in the royal palace of I Malingkaan Daeng Manyonri (also known as Sulṭān Awwalū'l-Islām], the King of Tallo, who was in fact the uncle of the King of Gowa, that Shaykh Yūsuf was purportedly born and raised. Textual information from the colophon of a manuscript, however, indicates that Shaykh Yūsuf's father was 'Abdullāh ibn Abī al-Khayr, identified by local sources such as *Lontarak Riwayakna Tuanta Salamaka ri Gowa* (according to Tallo version) as the *Gallarang* (Prince of) Moncongloë and the brother of the then King of Gowa known as I Manga'rangi Daeng Manrabbia Sultan Alauddin (Abu Hamid, 2005, quoting Magassing, 1993).

In his early years of life, Shaykh Yūsuf was educated according to the Islamic tradition. Having learned to read the Qur'an under local teacher Daeng ri Tasammang and acquired basic knowledge of Arabic, jurisprudence, theology and Sufism from Sayyid Bā'alawī ibn 'Abdillāh al-Tāhir and Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn al-Aydid, two wandering preachers who settled in Bontoala and Cikoang, respectively, Shaykh Yūsuf left his homeland for Arabia in Rajab 1054 AH/ September 1644 CE with the intention of undertaking further studies (Dangor, 1983). He first arrived in Banten, then one of the most important Muslim kingdoms in Java, where he managed to establish a close personal relationship with the Sultanate's elite. In 1649, he received permission from the Sultan Abū al-Mafākhir Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Qādir (the grandfather of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa) to leave for Mecca.

Following the ship route, he made a stop in Aceh and, after a brief stay there, sailed to Gujarat, India where he took instruction from the famous Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī as well as the latter's teacher, 'Umar ibn 'Abd Allāh Bāshaybān. The young Shaykh Yūsuf continued his journey to the Middle East and first arrived in Yemen, where he went to Zabīd and studied with Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Mizjājī al-Naqshabandī (d. 1664), Sayyid 'Alī al-Zabīdī, and Muḥammad ibn al-Wajīh al-Sa'dī al-Yamanī (Azra, 1995; 2004). After several years of sojourn in Yemen,

he finally reached Arabia. In the Holy City of Mecca, he married a daughter of a Shāfi'ī ulama and studied theology, Sufism, and several schools of jurisprudence (fiqh), which explains his open-mindedness and predilection for *ijtihād* (independent position) over strict adherence to any of the particular schools of Islamic law (Kemper, 2019).

Among his teachers in the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, the most important were Aḥmad al-Qushāshī (d. 1661), Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1690), Ḥasan al-'Ajamī (d. 1701) and 'Abd al-Karīm al-Lāhūrī (van Bruinessen, 1995). It is worth noting that in almost every place he visited, the young Shaykh Yūsuf was initiated into Sufi orders (*tarīqahs*) directly by their masters. During his stay in Aceh he was initiated into the Qādiriyya order, in Yemen into the Bā'alawiyya and the Naqshabandiyya, in Medina into the Shaṭṭāriyya, and finally in Damascus into the Khalwatiyya order (van Bruinessen, 1995, pp. 287-9).

Probably due to the encouragement of his teachers, the young Shaykh Yūsuf continued his travel from Medina to Damascus, to study with one of its leading scholars, Ayyūb ibn Aḥmad ibn Ayyūb al-Dimashqī al-Khalwatī (d. 1071/1661). Being a close friend of Aḥmad al-Qushāshī, Ayyūb al-Khalwatī was a renowned Sufi, jurist and ḥadīth scholar of Syria, about whom al-Ḥamawī and al-Muḥibbī say nobody else in Damascus was as learned as he was during his time (Azra, 2004; Abu Hamid, 2005). It was this Damascene scholar who later awarded Shaykh Yūsuf the honorific title *al-Tāj al-Khalwatī* (Crown of the Khalwati Order). Shaykh Yūsuf also reportedly travelled to Istanbul (*Negeri Rūm*) before his return to the archipelago in 1083 AH/1672 CE (Hamka, 1963 and Tudjimah, 1987). Despite its disputability, if this date of his return is correct, it means that Shaykh Yūsuf must have spent about 28 years traveling in search for knowledge.

Historical sources disagree, however, whether Shaykh Yūsuf directly returned to his homeland Makassar or went to Banten instead. Nevertheless, one thing is certain; upon his return from Mecca, he was appointed as a magistrate (*qāḍī*) and legal expert (*mufīṭ*) under Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa (1651–1683), a position stabilised by his second marriage to the daughter of the Sultan, whom he had known personally before he left for Arabia. Indeed, the socio-political and religious situation in Banten, then a famous port and an important centre of

international trade in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, was favourable for Shaykh Yūsuf to remain there. Soon, he became one of the most influential members of the Sultan's advisory council and played a vital role not only in religious matters but also in political affairs (Dangor, 1983).

Meanwhile, the Sultan of Gowa, having heard the news about Shaykh Yūsuf's influence and position in Banten, requested that the latter return to Makassar to accelerate the process of Islamisation in the region. Shaykh Yūsuf, however, declined the invitation and sent home, instead, his disciple 'Abd al-Baṣīr al-Ḍarīr (the blind). Few years later, when conflict arose between the Sultan of Banten and his Dutch-friendly son, 'Abd al-Qaḥḥār, Shaykh Yūsuf chose to take the side of the father, Sultan Ageng. With support and conspiracy of the Dutch, the crown-prince 'Abd al-Qaḥḥār declared the abdication of his father from the throne in 1680 and claimed it for himself – a decision soon followed by a civil war that broke in early 1682. The capture of Sultan Ageng a year later did not put an end to the armed conflict. Shaykh Yūsuf continued the Banten war nearly independently by leading approximately 2000 Buginese, Makasar, and Bantenese troops (including one of the sultan's sons) through mud, forests, and mountains with hostile forces on his trail. The guerilla warfare waged by Shaykh Yūsuf proved difficult to subdue. Employing the familiar trickery, however, the Dutch ensnared Shaykh Yūsuf and held him in captive on 14 December 1683 with which the Banten war was ended (Abu Hamid, 2005). The war-worn sheikh finally surrendered after one of his daughters was held hostage by the Dutch.

In September 1684, nearly a year after his capture, Shaykh Yūsuf was evicted to Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) together with his two wives, several children, twelve disciples and a number of maids (Dangor, 1983). Despite the perils and misfortune that he had to incur, the banishment turned out to be a blessing in disguise; for it is during his life in exile that Shaykh Yūsuf was able to return entirely to the intellectual world and produce a substantial number of scholarly works—an activity that he had abandoned when he was in Banten. However, no sooner had he settled in Ceylon than the Dutch came to realise that the banishment had failed to cut him off from the outside world. Far from being trapped in solitary confinement, Shaykh Yūsuf instead managed to establish contact not only with scholars of India but also

with the Moghul ruler, Aurangzeb (1659-1707) (Azra, 2004). Even more disturbing to the Dutch was the fact that Shaykh Yūsuf continued to have contact with, and influence upon, his fellow compatriots in the archipelago, which was made possible through the Malay-Indonesians pilgrims and traders who made Ceylon their transit points on their way to and back from Mecca (Abu Hamid, 2005).

In 1693 the Dutch, for fear of further political and religious repercussions, decided to banish Shaykh Yūsuf—then already 68 years old—even farther away to South Africa. Along with his retinue of 49 people, the Shaykh was transported to Zandvliet, a farm village in the Cape, so that, as one author writes, “he would not be in touch with any adherents of the old regime” (Jeffreys, 1939, quoted by Azra, 2004). In spite of an attempt to isolate him, Shaykh Yūsuf once again became the rallying point for the Malay-Indonesians there, though for this time not to rise up against the Dutch but to intensify their religious faith and practices. With such activities, Shaykh Yūsuf was able not only to preserve the Islamic belief of his fellow exiles – against the Christianising effort – but also to gain numerous new converts to Islam.⁶ Shaykh Yūsuf died at the Cape at the age of seventy-three on May 23, 1699 (23 Dhū al-Qa‘da 1110 AH).

Scholarly Output

Shaykh Yūsuf’s works revolve around Sufism and theology. Having studied for more than two decades in the Middle East, he wrote mostly in Arabic, although there exist several works attributed to him that are

⁶ For the earliest references to Shaykh Yūsuf in South Africa, see Francois Valentyn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, Dordrecht and Amsterdam, 1724-1726, III: 208-209; K. Scherzer, *Narrative of the Circumnavigation of the Globe by the Austrian Frigate Novara in the Years 1857, 1858 and 1859* (London, 1861), 1: 245-8. For a detailed description his role and Muslim activities in the Cape, see A. van Selms, “Yussuf (Joseph), Sheikh” in W. J. de Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biographies* (Capetown, 1968), 893; I.D. du Plessis, *The Cape Malays: History, Religion, Traditions, Folk Tales of the Malay Quarter*, Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1972. For the latest study, see Jappie, Saarah, “Many Makassars: Tracing an Africa-Southeast Asian Narrative of Shaykh Yusuf Taj al-Khalwati al-Maqassari,” in *Migration and Agency in a Globalizing World: Afro-Asian Encounters*, ed. Scarlett Cornelissen and Yoichi Mine (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

written in vernacular (Buginese) language using Lontara script.⁷ In writing his treatises, Shaykh Yūsuf apparently used many sources. We can classify his sources into three: (a) the works of previous scholars; (b) the works of his contemporaries or that of his own masters; (c) and finally the oral sources from several masters with whom he studied. There is not the faintest doubt that he was influenced mostly by his Sufi teachers who defended Ibn ‘Arabī and his school of thought.

A closer look at his various writings reveals three major themes discussed by Shaykh Yūsuf: (a) the need to observe the Divine Law (*Sharī‘a*) and to attain the Truth (*Ḥaqīqa*) concerning God and His relation to human being; (b) the need to understand the requirement of drawing near to God and how to become one of His “friends” (*awliyā’*), which includes positive thinking about the Creator and His creatures, having a good moral character, and following the guidance of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings upon him); and (c) the need to perform the liturgical remembrance of God (*dhikr Allāh*) as a means to attain the Truth.

Like his predecessors Nur al-Dīn al-Rānīrī and ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Sinkilī, Shaykh Yūsuf, who was fluent in several languages, frequently cites Sufi key-terms and concepts in Arabic, accompanied by the Malay equivalent. He often refers to Junayd al-Baghdādī, Abu Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Arabī, ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, and Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh in order to anchor his discourse with the sayings of authorities in the field. Most of Shaykh Yūsuf’s writings can be found in the manuscript collections preserved at the National Library of Indonesia (PNRI) in Jakarta, i.e., MS A101 (dated 1186 AH/1772 CE, comprising 104 folios/193 pages), MS A108 (comprising 303 folios/606 pages), MS A45 (383 pages), and at the University of Leiden Library in the Netherlands, i.e., MS Or. 7025 (46 pages) and MS Or. 5706 (Voorhoeve, 1957, p. 341). We provide a synoptical description of his extant works that have been critically edited and published as well as those which are still in manuscript form:

⁷ The Lontara script (ᨆᨇᨍᨇᨍ) or *Urupu Sulapa’ Eppa’* (four-cornered letters) is one of Indonesia’s traditional scripts developed in the South Sulawesi and West Sulawesi region. The script is primarily used to write the Buginese language, followed by Makassarese and Mandar. See Everson (2003) and Tol (2015).

1. *Al-Barakāt al-Saylāniyya* ('The Ceylonese Blessings'). A manuscript copy of this work is preserved in the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta, MS A108, fols. 34v.– 40r. = pp. 67-79. A philological study of this work was carried out by Ali Saputra under the supervision of Professor Nabilah Lubis entitled *al-Barakāt al-Saylāniyyah ta'līf al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Makāsarī (1627-1699): Dirāsah wa Taḥqīq wa Tarjamah* (Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 1429/2008), which offered a critical edition as well as translation into Indonesian. In this treatise, Shaykh Yūsuf explains the steps to purify one's heart through remembrance of God and the threefold method for getting closer to God, namely, by using meditation or "staying vigilant" through the heart (*murāqabāt al-qalb*), by using meditation through the spirit (*murāqabāt al-rūh*), and by using meditation through the inner self (*murāqabāt al-sirr*).
2. *Al-Fawā'ih al-Yūsufiyya fī Bayān Taḥqīq al-Ṣūfiyya* (The Josephic Fragrances on the Essence of Sufism). Along with the previous work, this treatise is found in the above-mentioned compilation (MS A108 of the National Library of Indonesia), folios 40v.– 45v = pp. 80-91. No academic study has been conducted on this relatively short work. In this treatise, Shaykh Yūsuf discusses two important elements of human nature, the outer side and the inner side. The former is tackled by the *Sharī'ah*, while the latter by the *Ṭarīqah*, i.e. the Sufi path leading to the Truth (*Ḥaqīqah*). Those who walk in the way of Sufism must maintain good conduct and sincere heart. Shaykh Yūsuf also remarks that observing the *Sharī'ah* rules without achieving the *Ḥaqīqah* is incomplete, whereas attaining the *Ḥaqīqah* without following the *Sharī'ah* is incorrect.
3. *Al-Nafḥah al-Saylāniyya* (The Ceylonese Breeze). A critical edition of this text is provided by Andi Syamsul Bahri Galigo in his doctoral dissertation titled "Syeikh Yusuf Makassar dan Pemikiran Tasawwufnya: Satu Kajian atas *Risālah al-Nafḥah al-Saylāniyyah*" (Shaykh Yūsuf of Makassar and his Sufi thought: A study of the Ceylone Breeze epistle). Submitted to the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in 1998, it was based on the manuscript of the National Library of Indonesia MS A101 folios 1r.–15v. In this work, Shaykh Yūsuf explains the need for

a spiritual guide in order to reach God. A person who embarks on a journey to God is advised to find a mentor (*shaykh*), to follow and obey him unconditionally without questioning his actions.

4. *Sirr al-Asrār* (The Secret of Secrets). This treatise was edited and translated into English by Suleman Essop Dangor in a monograph entitled *Sirr al-Asrār: The Secret of Secrets* by Shaykh Yūsuf (Durban: Centre for Research in Islamic Studies, University of Durban-Westville, 1995). Dangor relied on a manuscript copy in the University of Leiden Library Collection Or. 7025, fols. 34v.–52v. At the National Library of Indonesia, there is another handwritten copy of the text within the MS A108, folios 63v.–71r. In this work, Shaykh Yūsuf advises the seekers of truth to constantly remember God, to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet and to conform to the Divine Law (Sharī'ah).
5. *Tuḥfat al-Ṭālib al-Mubtadī wa Minhāt al-Sālik al-Muhtadī* (A Present for the New Seeker and a Gift for the Guided Traveller). The text of this work survives in a manuscript copy dated 1221 AH which is now preserved in the National Library of Indonesia, MS A45, pp. 3–126. Baharuddin Abd Rahman studied this text and together with a critical edition of it in a small book entitled *Penampakan Diri Tuhan: Al Makassari dan Martabat Tujuh* (God's Self-Disclosure: al-Makassari and the Seven Degrees of Existence), published by the Qaf Academy, Jakarta, 1437/2016. In this work, Shaykh Yūsuf elucidates the meaning of Divine oneness, the so-called “permanent archetypes” (*al-a'yān al-thābitah*), and the world in relation to its Creator.
6. *Maṭālib al-Sālikīn li-man Qaṣada Rabb al-Ālamīn* (The Goals of those Who Walk in order to Reach the Lord of the Universe). We can find the manuscript copy of this work in the Indonesian National Library Collection in Jakarta (MS A101, fol. 43v.–45v and MS A108 fols. 26v.-31r. = pp. 52-61). In this brief treatise, Shaykh Yūsuf elucidates the significance of affirming God's oneness (*tawḥīd*) as well as the importance of knowing God (*ma'rifat Allāh*), and the true meaning of devotional worship (*'ibādah*). These three concepts, symbolised by the branches of a tree, its bark, and its fruit, are, according to Shaykh Yūsuf, the most salient factors in understanding God and drawing near

to Him. The tree symbolises the Oneness of God, while the branches and the bark symbolise knowledge of God (*ma'rifah*), and the fruit symbolises worship (*'ibādah*).

7. *Zubdat al-Asrār fi Taḥqīq ba'd Mashārib al-Akhyār* (The Core Secrets concerning Some Essential Goblets of Excellent People). There are three extant copies of this text, one being preserved in the Leiden University Library (MS Or. 7025, fols. 10v.-33r.) and two others in the National Library of Indonesia (MS A101 fols. 16r.-25v and MS A108 fols. 286v.-300v. = pp. 570-707 as shown in Figure 1 below). Nabilah Lubis studied, edited and translated it for the doctoral dissertation she submitted to the University of Indonesia, a revised version of which later appeared as *Menyingkap Intisari Segala Rahasia: Syekh Yusuf al-Taj al-Makassari* (Unveiling the Core Secrets: Shaykh Yūsuf al-Tāj al-Makassarī), published by Mizan, Jakarta 1996. In this treatise, the Shaykh not only expounds the essential articles of Islamic belief, and the role of remembering God to repent of all one's sins, but he also explains the Sufi notion of the "perfect man" (*al-insān al-kāmil*).
8. *Ḥabl al-Warīd li-Sa'adat al-Murīd* (The Jugular Vein for the Joy of the Novice). Written in 1687, this work is found in the collection of Syekh Sahib Sultan Karaeng Nompo of the Tarekat Khalwatiyya Yūsuf and Mu'tabarah Nahdliyyin of Makassar. According to Simon Kemper (2019), it was written by Shaykh Yūsuf in response to requests from his followers left on both Java and South Sulawesi. The treatise implicitly urges the Shaykh's followers to wait for his return or seek a new shaykh, likely his main deputy (*khalīfah*) 'Abd al-Baṣīr. Real believers are told to respect their shaykh like a father and obey him because he holds spiritual authority and serves as the Prophet's caliph too. Sultans and lords should not be ignored, but in dire straits, the shaykh is to take the lead.
9. *Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id* (The Pillars of the Creed). This is one of the theological treatises that Shaykh Yūsuf is believed to have written in his native tongue, Buginese. Indeed, it was not uncommon for Muslim scholars of Southeast Asia to compose their works in Malay, Acehnese, Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, etc. using

Arabic (Jawi) script and put their titles in Arabic. The text of *Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id* is found in a manuscript copy preserved at the National Library of Indonesia, Bugis collection, MS PNRI Jakarta VT-23, pp. 177-193. Despite some doubt regarding its authenticity, this work bears witness to Shaykh Yūsuf's attention to those who do not understand Arabic.

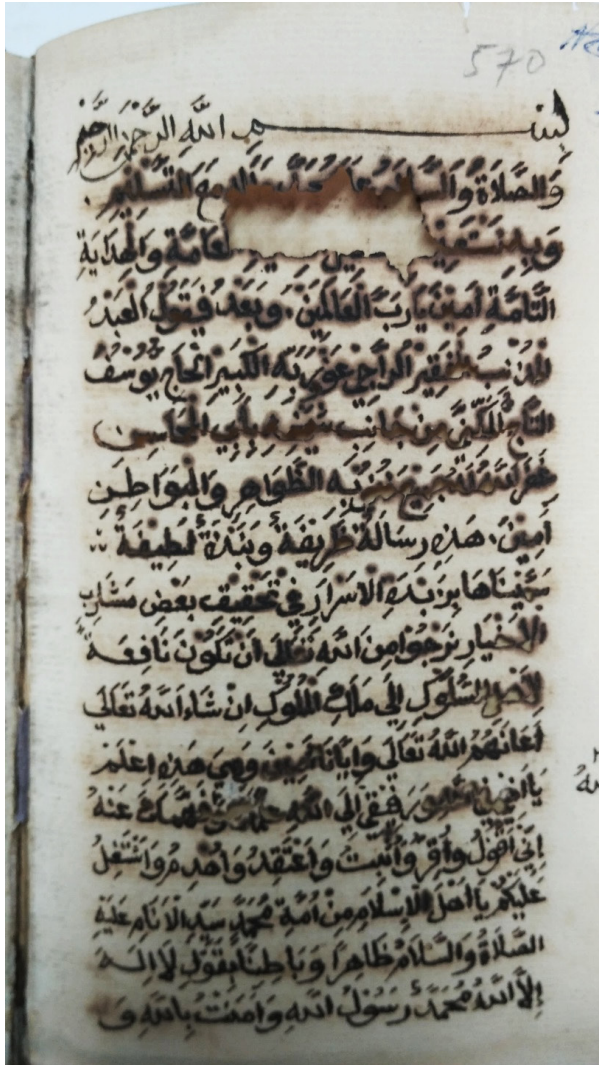


Figure 1. First page of *Zubdat al-Asrār*
(MS A108 folio no. 286 verso/page 570)

10. *Al-Tawḥīd al-Khālīṣ* (The Pure Affirmation of Divine Oneness) is another treatise attributed to Shaykh Yūsuf that is written in Buginese language and script. Extant in a manuscript copy preserved at the National Library of Indonesia, Bugis collection, MS PNRI Jakarta VT-23, pp. 230-244, this important text deals with Sufi metaphysics and ontology, explaining the degrees of existence or hierarchy of beings in relation to the theory of emanation.

In addition to these works, there exist around 20 short treatises attributed to Shaykh Yūsuf, most of which are still in manuscript. They include: *Qurrat al-‘Ayn* (Solace of the Eyes), *Shurūṭ al-‘Ārif al-Muḥaqqiq* (Requirements of the True Gnostic), *Tāj al-Asrār* (The Crown of Secrets), *Tuḥfat al-Amr fī Faḍīlat al-Dhikr* (The Gift of Command on the Benefit of Remembrance), *Maṭalib al-Sālikīn li-man Qaṣada Rabb al-‘Ālamīn* (The Goals of Travellers for those who Wish to Reach the Lord of the Universe), *Tuḥfat al-Abrār li-Ahl al-Asrār* (The Gift for the Good People from the Possessors of Secrets), *Mir‘āt al-Muḥaqqiqīn* (‘The Mirror of the Verifiers’), *Risālah fī Taḥqīq al-‘Ulūm wa Tadqīq al-Fuhūm* (A Treatise on Verifying the Sciences and Investigating Comprehension), *Risālah fī Ghāyat al-Ikhtiṣār Nāf‘ah li-Dhawī al-Abṣār* (A Treatise in the Utmost Brevity and the Ultimate Vision). The doubts concerning their authenticity notwithstanding (Misbachul Islam, 2019), the prevailing opinion among scholars including Syamsul Bahri Andi Galigo (1998), Keraan and Haron (2008), Lukmanul Hakim Darusman (2008), Abdul Kadir Assegaf (2008), and Subhan Hariadi Putra (2009), is that the doctrines espoused in these works bear traces of Shaykh Yūsuf’s views in one form or another.

Theological Views

Central to Shaykh Yūsuf’s teachings are the concept of the purification of belief (*‘aqīdah*) and the affirmation of God’s oneness (*tawḥīd*), through which he attempts to explain the transcendence of God over His creation. Referring to *sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* (chapter 112 of the Holy Qur’an) and verse 11 of chapter 42, which states that “nothing can be compared with Him,” Shaykh Yūsuf holds that *tawḥīd* is infinite and absolute since it is the essential component in Islam; one who does not accept it is considered an unbeliever (*kāfir*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, p. 2). He further compares the immaculate *tawḥīd* with a leafy tree: gnostic knowledge

(*maʿrifah*) is its branches and leaves, and devotional services (*ʿibādāt*) are its fruits. One who does not possess knowledge (*maʿrifah*) of God is ignorant and one who does not perform rituals is sinful (*fāsiq*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Maṭālib*, p. 81-2).

Shaykh Yūsuf discusses the nature of Divine oneness in his discourse on existence (*al-wujūd*). According to him, existence can be seen in two categories: the first is the Real-True existence (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqq*) and the second is the created existence (*wujūd al-khalq*). The first is absolute existence (*muṭlaq*), independent (*qāʿim bi-naḥsih*), beginningless (*qadīm*) and eternal (*bāqī*), while the second is relative existence (*idāfī*) and figurative (*majāzī*). It is so called precisely because its existence is conditioned by and “borrowed” (*muʿār*) from something else, that is, derived from the existence of the Real-True one. In other words, the existence of a creature is caused by, and contingent upon, something other than itself (*qāʿim bi-ghayrih*), whereas the existence of the Creator (God) is necessary (*wājib al-wujūd*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Tuḥfa*, p. 64).

Even though he affirms the transcendence of God, Shaykh Yūsuf maintains that God is All-Encompassing and Omnipresent (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥā*, p. 23; id., *Maṭālib*, p. 81; and id., *Sirr*, p. 86). This notion of God being All-Encompassing (*iḥāṭah*) and Omnipresent (*al-maʿiyyah*) reminds us of the doctrine of ontological monism (*wahdat al-wujūd*) espoused by the famous Andalusian master Ibn ʿArabī (d. 637/1240). Shaykh Yūsuf, however, has taken great care not to associate himself with or let his readers accuse him of being pantheistic by saying that although God is Omnipresent, it does not necessarily mean that the creation is God Himself; nor are they in any way identical, for all creatures are only metaphorically existent (*al-mawjūd al-majāzī*) in contradistinction to God, who alone is the Real Existent (*al-mawjūd al-ḥaqīqī*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥā*, p. 22 and id., *Zubda*, p. 32). Thus, in his view, the existence of creation (*makhḥlūq*) is to that of God like the existence of a shadow (*ẓill*) to that of its object.

Having introduced the concept of Divine Omnipresence through two key-terms *iḥāṭah* (being all-encompassing) and *maʿiyyah* (being together with), Shaykh Yūsuf declares that God descends (*tanazzala*) while man ascends (*taraqqā*), a spiritual process that would bring the two closer. According to him, however, this process will not take its form in the ultimate unity between man and God, nor will the latter

ever incarnate or reside in the former. Although the two may be coming closely associated, in the final analysis, nevertheless, man remains man and God is God. With this position, Shaykh Yūsuf seems to be trying to disengage himself from the controversial doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabi’s *waḥdat al-wujūd* and to have rejected al-Ḥallāj’s notorious doctrine of *ḥulūl* (incarnation), arguing that the manifestation of God in His creations is not His physical presence in them since in his opinion, nothing is identical or comparable to God (al-Qur’ān 42: 11). It is this spiritual process of *taraqqī* that will transform a person into a perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*); for he who has achieved this stage of perfection stripes his allegorical existence (*al-wujūd al-majāzī*) and enters true nothingness (*al-‘adam al-haqīqī*). In this way, Shaykh Yūsuf explains, man’s nothingness is taken by God as a mirror of the latter. Further, God reveals or manifests (*tajallā*) Himself in the servant (*‘abd*). Once absorbed (*fanā*) in the existence of God, the servant is not only exposed to the secrets of his Master (*Rabbih*), but also capable of seeing through His Sight, hearing with His Hearing, reaching with His Hands, walking with His Feet, and speaking with His Word and thinking with His Mind (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Zubda*, 36-9).

Shaykh Yūsuf does not delve into the long and heated controversy over *waḥdat al-wujūd* (unity of being) and *ḥulūl* (incarnation) doctrine, to which many have fallen prey. He maintains that even though a person can reach the existence of God, the person will nevertheless remain a human being, whereas God remains God—that is, *al-‘abd ‘abdun wa in taraqqā wa al-rabb rabbun wa in tanazzal*) (See Lubis (1994), p. 172). It is worth noting that, as far as theology is concerned, Shaykh Yūsuf strictly adheres to the Ash‘arite doctrines. Thus, he stresses the total commitment to all six articles of belief (*arkān al-īmān*) i.e. belief in the existence one God, angels, revealed books, prophets, resurrection, and in the decree of God. Furthermore, in connection with impeccable belief in these articles of faith, Shaykh Yūsuf asks his fellow Muslims to fully accept the ambiguous meanings of the obscure verses in the Qur’an (*al-āyāt al-mutashābihāt*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, p. 2). According to him, trying to look for or questioning the real meanings of such intriguing verses is simply an indication of not believing in God since only with total acceptance of such verses can a traveller (*sālik*) on God’s path be able to obtain the Divine blessings and mercy (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, p. 28 and id., *Qurra*, pp. 54-5).

Like his fellow Ash'arites, Shaykh Yūsuf too emphasises human predestination vis-à-vis the will of God. Accepting this notion, he repeatedly appeals to Muslims to sincerely embrace their fate and God's decree (*al-qadā' wa al-qadar*), whether good or bad (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Fawā'ih*, pp. 80-1 and id., *Nafḥa*, pp. 8-9). Shaykh Yūsuf, however, insists that men must not simply surrender to them, and of particular importance, men cannot blame God for their bad deeds, because they must not simply claim those actions as their fate. Instead, they must make ceaseless efforts to eliminate sinful behaviour and improve their humanity by positive thinking about the creation and doing good deeds. This action, Shaykh Yūsuf contends, will enable people to create a better life in this world and the next. More importantly, by so doing, they will be able to attain the level of unrestricted adoration (*al-'ubūdiyyah al-muṭlaqah*), that is the highest stage a servant of God can achieve (Lubis, 1996, p. 172).

Shaykh Yūsuf also seeks to solve one of the most perplexing theological problems, trying to reconcile all God's attributes, which may appear to the lay people to contradict one another. Indeed, seemingly contradictory verses are found throughout the Qur'an where God is described, for instance, as the Exterior (*al-Zāhir*) and the Interior (*al-Bāṭin*); the one who guides (*al-Hādī*) and the one who leads human beings astray (*al-Muḍill*); the one who expands his gift (*al-Bāsiṭ*) and the one who prevents it (*al-Māni'*). According to Shaykh Yūsuf, all these seemingly conflicting attributes of God should be understood in accordance with the principle of God's oneness (*tawḥīd*). Otherwise, emphasising only certain attributes, while ignoring or rejecting the others will lead to disbelief. Furthermore, Shaykh Yūsuf asserts that the realities of God are the unity of pairs of His conflicting attributes, but none is capable of understanding their secrets except those who possess knowledge and discernment which God has bestowed upon them (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Tāj*, 76-7).

Sufi Doctrines

Let us turn now to Shaykh Yūsuf's views and teachings, particularly concerning the Sufi path or order (*tarīqah*). Sufis are generally Muslims who wish to practice their religion in an expressive way. They believe in divine love and the rewards of moral purity and seek direct contact with God, rather than occupying themselves with the legalism and

intellectualism of the orthodox approach to Islam propounded by the jurists (*fuqahā'*), philosophers and theologians (*mutakallimūn*). Although many Sufis pursued their quest of God in solitude, sometimes becoming hermits, soon they began to establish fraternities, or orders (*ṭarīqah*), and laid down elaborate rules for members recruitment, spiritual training, and ritual services. The Sufi liturgy, for example, is designed to assist the disciple to achieve a spiritual state (*ḥāl*) in which the body loses all sensation and the soul experiences God. To achieve this state, a particular formula of *dhikr* is uttered repeatedly or incessantly until the words themselves no longer make any impression on the senses. In more extremist orders, such as the *Rifā'īyyah* the recitation of the *dhikr* may be accompanied by music, violent rhythmic jerkings, or piercing of cheeks, throat and other parts of the body with sharp instruments without any resultant bleeding or visible wounds (Hoffman, 2003).

Shaykh Yūsuf reserves *taṣawwuf* for the elites among the elites (*khawāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*) and calls his Sufism by the familiar name *al-ṭarīqah al-Muḥammadiyah* or *al-ṭarīqah al-Aḥmadiyah*—so as to associate it with Prophet Muḥammad, which, according to him, constitutes the right path (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Fawā'id*, p. 83; id., *Qurra*, p. 52; and id., *Sirr*, p. 94.). Throughout his writings Shaykh Yūsuf makes it clear that the mystical way can only be trod through a total commitment both outwardly and inwardly to the legal doctrines of Islam (*Sharī'ah*). He maintains that committing oneself simply to the *Sharī'ah* is better than practising *taṣawwuf* while ignoring legal precepts (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Zubda*, p. 37). He even goes so far as to call those who believe or claim that they will be able to get closer to God without performing such rituals as daily prayer and fasting as misbeliever (*zindīq*) and heretic (*mulḥid*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Zubda*, p. 42).

Sufism has two goals, according to Shaykh Yūsuf. The first goal is to focus the aim on God only and the last goal is to imitate the noble characteristics of God (*awwal taṣawwuf huwa tajrīd al-qaṣd ilā Allāh ta'ālā, wa ākhiruhū al-takhalluq bi-akhlāq Allāh*). He quotes 'Alī's saying that the first goal of Sufism is thus to have knowledge about God, the second is to do good deeds, and the third is to receive a gift [of knowledge from God]: *awwal taṣawwuf 'ilm wa awṣaṭuhū 'amal wa ākhiruhū mawhibah*. For Shaykh Yūsuf, it is also incumbent upon those

walking in the path of God to believe in God's destiny that is to believe in what God has decreed, willed and provided in the past, the present and the future. This does not mean that Sufism teaches fatalism in life; in contrast, this concept drives its followers to be active in worldly life for the sake of the Hereafter since God has given human beings the choice to do their best before everything is destined. It is this effort that God will judge in people. The second goal is the importance of performing the outer and the inner aspects of *Sharī'ah*.

In his attempt to reconcile the exoteric with esoteric aspects of Islam, Shaykh Yūsuf frequently quotes statements of unnamed authorities who classify as sinful (*fāsiq*) those who stick only to the *Sharī'ah* without the esoteric truth (*ḥaqīqah*), and regard those who practice *taṣawwuf* but neglect the legal precepts as heretic (*zindiq*) (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Fawā'ih*, p. 82; *Nafḥa*, p. 4; *Tāj*, pp. 73–4). According to Shaykh Yusuf, the best that can be done is to harmonise the two: “let it be known, my dear fellows, exoteric devotion without esoteric understanding is like a body without soul and vice-versa” (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, p. 4; *Tāj*, p. 74). Thus, he insists that everyone who wishes to embark on a spiritual journey to God should practise all the precepts of the *Sharī'ah* before he enters Sufism (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Maṭālib*, 85). He then lists down the ways to get closer to God. First is the way of righteous folk (*al-akhyār*), that is by performing numerous prayers (*ṣalāh*), reading the Qur'an and Ḥadith, striving in the way of God and other exoteric devotions. The second way is that of the people who strive (*mujāhid*) against hardship through rigorous training to give up bad habits and to purify the mind and soul. The last one is the way of the people of remembrance (*ahl al-dhikr*) who love God both outwardly and inwardly and pay attention to both exoteric and esoteric kinds of devotion (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, pp. 23–4).

Nevertheless, Shaykh Yūsuf discourages the traveller on the path of God (*sālik*) from treading his own way in seeking truth; for it will only lead him astray because Satan will become his master. Therefore, he should look for a trusted and well-experienced Sufi master (*shaykh*), even if he, as a consequence, must travel to distant places, leaving his family and homeland behind. Moreover, only with the guidance of a trustworthy Sufi master will he be able to get closer to God; because the master will show him the correct way to achieve spiritual progress. More than that, the true Sufi masters are successors of the Prophet, and

are his representatives both outwardly and inwardly (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, pp. 2 and 24-5). Evidently, Shaykh Yūsuf accords Sufi masters such high a position that once a disciple is initiated to a Sufi order and pledges allegiance to his master, he must obey the master and never question his instruction, even if the master does something mundane that does not necessarily lead to a closer communion with God or appears contrary to the legal precepts. In accordance with the traditional way, a disciple should behave towards his master like a dead body in the hands of its washer. In support of his view, Shaykh Yūsuf cites Ibn ‘Arabī who maintained that while the Sufi masters are not infallible, just like some prophets who also made mistakes (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, pp. 2 and 24-5), the disciple should keep up his practise of good deeds and never imitate his master’s peculiar acts (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Tuḥfa*, cited in Tudjimah, 1987, p 114).

With regard to the nature of human beings, Shaykh Yūsuf, like most Sufis, also holds a positive view. According to him, every individual has an innate disposition (*fiṭrah*) or natural inclination to believe in God, and those who are closest to Him are the ones who can nurture that inborn disposition in the right way (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Sirr*, 95). For this reason, Shaykh Yūsuf appeals to his fellow believers not to scorn or look down upon those who do not believe in God and those who live a sinful life. The faithful must always maintain a good opinion (*ḥusn al-zann*) about the unbelievers and should get rid of all sorts of negative thoughts (*sū’ al-zann*) about others. Citing the famous Sufi master Abū Madyan al-Tilimsānī, Shaykh Yūsuf reminds the believers that the flaws of the infidel might be better than the pitfalls of the faithful (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Nafḥa*, p. 12). With such a view, it is not surprising that nowhere in his works does Shaykh Yūsuf ever express contempt for the Dutch, even though they had inflicted a great misery upon his life.

Moreover, Shaykh Yūsuf classifies the believers into four categories. First, those who simply utter the statement of faith (*shahādah*) without believing; they are the hypocrites (*al-munāfiq*). The second group is those who do not only utter the *shahādah* but also implant it deep into their souls; they are called the common faithful (*al-mu’min al-awāmm*). The third category is the group of faithful who fully manifest the inward and outward meaning or implication of their statement of faith in their daily life. These are the people of the elite (*ahl al-khawāṣṣ*). Finally, we have the highest category of the faithful, who surpass the third group by

intensifying their statement of faith mainly by practising Sufism to get closer to God. Accordingly, they are called the elect of the elect (*khāṣṣ al-khawāṣṣ*), whom Shaykh Yūsuf regard as the true Sufis (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Barakāt*, p. 71 and id., *Nafḥa*, pp. 4-5).

Another important doctrine espoused by Shaykh Yūsuf is the idea of “perfect man” (*al-insān al-kāmil*). As ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī made clear, it refers to the servant of God who is elevated and fortified by Him, having established himself after his extinction or absorption (*fanā*) in the state of subsistence (*baqā*), so that God will answer whatever he asks” (al-Jīlī, 1983, pp. 39, 45 and 48). According to Shaykh Yūsuf, in order to attain the level of “perfect man,” a person must perform all the religious duties with sincere intention for the sake of God alone, follow all the Prophetic teachings, outwardly and inwardly, and most importantly be in constant awareness of God’s presence and omniscience in such a way that all these good deeds become habits. Only then can s/he be called *al-insān al-kāmil* (perfect man). In his words: “one is not a true follower of him [i.e. the Prophet]—may God bless and grant him peace—unless he obeys the divine law (*Sharī‘ah*) outwardly and conforms to the truth (*ḥaqīqah*) inwardly. Only then can the person be worthy of the name “perfect man” (*insān kāmil*), considering his achievement in actually following him [i.e. the Prophet]—may God bless and grant him peace—treading his path outwardly as well as inwardly” (Shaykh Yūsuf, *Sirr*, p. 93; Ali (2016).

It is obvious that Shaykh Yūsuf’s conception of “perfect man” is not only based on al-Jīlī’s treatise on the subject, but also inspired by the works of prominent Sufi scholars including al-Ghazālī and Ibn ‘Arabī. In *al-Fawā’ih al-Yūsufīyah*, he stresses the need to maintain a balance between the outer aspect and the inner aspect of *Sharī‘ah* that will allow a person to attain perfection (*kamāl*) by combining commitment to the Divine law (*Sharī‘ah*) with knowledge of reality (*ḥaqīqah*). What underlies this notion of “perfect man” is the idea that human beings have the potential to bring all divine attributes into play in the fullness of human actuality and, conversely, at all times the divine presence may manifest itself through, or in certain individuals, who become the human embodiment of divine qualities, and whose purpose is to be a shepherd, guide, and guardian of mankind, directing it towards the good and keeping it from what is wrong.

Conclusion

Shaykh Yūsuf was no doubt a remarkable scholar. Even though he was primarily a Sufi, with respect to his career and teachings, he may be included among the few, most important renewers (*mujaddidūn*) of Islam in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. His turbulent life, as we have recounted, makes it clear that Sufism did not keep him away from being engaged in worldly (socio-political) affairs. Thus, unlike other Sufis who exhibit strong tendencies to shun—if not neglect worldly life, Shaykh Yūsuf's teachings and practices shows a full range of activism. Indeed, he is what people in France would describe as a true intellectual—in contrast to the so-called “ivory-tower intellectuals.” He fought in the colonial war, was evicted to Sri Lanka and at last to South Africa. During his exile, however, he penned treatises explaining Islamic doctrines and the role of religious leadership during peace and warfare. In many respects, the life and thought of Shaykh Yūsuf exemplify the ways in which Sufi scholars sought to synthesise their fidelity to Shari'a with their commitment to the metaphysical ideas espoused by thinkers such as Ibn 'Arabī and al-Jīlī.

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(i) Al-Bukhārī, 88:204 (where 88 is the book number, 204 is the ḥadīth number)

(ii) Ibn Hanbal, vol. 1, p. 1

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(ii) Ibn Ḥanbal, A. (1982). *Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*. Istanbul: Cagri Yayinlari.

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